

Message Text

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21

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9139

INFO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 1881

LIMDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CB

SUBJECT: APPROACH TO GKR BY SIHANOUKIST ELEMENTS

1. I CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET JANUARY 30 AT HIS REQUEST. HIS PRIMARY INTEREST WAS TO BRIEF ME ON AN EIGHT-HOUR SESSION HE HAD HAD WITH AN ALLEGED ENVOY SENT TO PHNOM PENH BY ISOUP GHANTY, HEAD OF THE GRUNK INFORMATION BUREAU IN STOCKHOM, TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE GKR ON BEHALF OF SIHANOUK. THE INTERMEDIARY WAS "PROFESSOR DR. FRANCOIS HSIEH" (AKA HON CHUN SHIEH), WHO IS THE AIR CAMBODGE REPRESENTATIVE IN STOCKHOM AND WHOSE BUSINESS CARD IDENTIFIES HIM AS MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NITOUR SCANDINAVIA.

2. ACCORDING TO THE PRIME MINISTER, HSIEH'S MESSAGE FROM ISOUP WAS THAT SIHANOUK WISHES TO LEAVE PEKING PERMANENTLY AND WANTS TO ACCOMPLISH THIS PRIOR TO THE MARCH 23 ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF FUNK IN ORDER TO AVOID THE FURTHER COMMITMENT TO THE GRUNK CAUSE THAT THE MARCH 23 ANNIVERSARY CEREMONIALS WOULD REQUIRE OF HIM. ISOUP ALLEDGEDLY SAID THAT SIHANOUK WISHES TO BE INVITED TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO SOME FOREIGN COUNTRY WHERE
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HE WOULD THEN TAKE UP PERMANENT RESIDENCE IN PLACE OF

PEKING. INDIA, THE SOVIET UNION AND POLAND WERE SUGGESTED AS NEW HOME BASES FOR SIHANOUK.

3. ISOUP ALSO PROPOSED TO THE GKR THROUGH HSIEH THAT CONTACTS BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE GKR AND SIHANOUKIST REPRESENTATIVES. ISOUP AND TWO OTHER GRUNK PERSONALITIES TO BE DISCLOSED SUBSEQUENTLY WOULD REPRESENT THE SIHANOUK SIDE, AND LONG BORET WAS ASKED TO PROVIDE HSIEH WITH A LIST OF TEN SUGGESTED PERSONALITIES TO REPRESENT THE GKR SIDE, FROM WHICH SIHANOUK WOULD SELECT THREE NAMES. HSIEH IS SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO STOCKHOM JANUARY 31.

4. LONG BORET COMMENTED TO ME THAT HE HAD SPENT A GOOD DEAL OF TIME QUESTIONING HSIEH AND LOOKING INTO HIS BONA FIDES. (HSIEH CARRIES BOTH KHMER AND PORTUGUESE PASSPORTS. HE WAS BORN IN MACAO AND IS OF CHINESE ETHNIC ORIGIN.) LONG BORET WAS OBVIOUSLY SOMEWHAT AT A LOSS AS TO WHAT TO MAKE OF THE APPROACH BY HSIEH, HAD SERIOUS DOUBTS AS TO WHETHER IT WAS A LEGITIMATE APPROACH FROM SIHANOUK, AND WANTED MY ADVICE ON WHETHER THIS APPROACH OUGHT TO BE PURSUED. LONG BORET SAID HE HAD WORKED UP FOUR POSSIBLE HYPOTHESES ABOUT HSIEH'S PITCH:

A. ISOUP INVENTED THE WHOLE BUSINESS IN ORDER TO PROMOTE HIS OWN FORTUNES WITHIN THE GRUNK. LONG BORET EXPLAINED THAT ISOUP IS TOTALLY LOYAL TO SIHANOUK, AND THE KHMER ROUGE HAVE TRIED TO DISPLACE HIM IN STOCKHOM WITH ONE OF THEIR OWN MEN. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY, LONG BORET SAID, IS THAT ISOUP IS TRYING TO GET SIHANOUK OUT OF PEKING AND THE CLUTCHES OF THE COMMUNISTS SINCE ISOUP HIMSELF IS VERY ANTI-COMMUNIST.

B. ISOUP AND HSIEH ARE CONSPIRING TOGETHER FOR SOME OBSCURE PURPOSE OF THEIR OWN.

C. SON SANN IS BEHIND THIS SCHEME, SINCE HSIEH MENTIONED THAT A POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF THE GKR-SIHANOUK TALKS WOULD BE FORMATION OF A SORT OF A "THIRD FORCE" GOVERNMENT HEADED BY SON SANN AS PRIME MINISTER.

D. THE SOVIETS WERE BEHIND THIS SCHEME. LONG BORET THOUGHT THAT THE MENTION OF THE SOVIET UNION, POLAND

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OR INDIA AS POSSIBLE NEW HOMES FOR SIHANOUK MIGHT BE EVIDENCE OF THIS.

5. IN RESPONDING TO LONG BORET I SAID THAT I HAD THE IMPRESSION FROM OUR EMBASSY IN SWEDEN THAT HSIEH DOES NOT ENJOY A GOOD REPUTATION IN STOCKHOM, AND HE MAY EVEN BE A CON MAN. ALSO, I SAID, ISOUP HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN INVOLVED IN VARIOUS EFFORTS TO CONTACT GKR REPRESENT-

ATIVES ABOUT A POSSIBLE COMPROMISE WITH SIHANOUK AND NONE OF THESE HAVE PRODUCED ANY POSITIVE RESULTS. I WAS THEREFORE HIGHLY SKEPTICAL THAT THIS LATEST APPROACH WOULD PRODUCE ANYTHING WORTHWHILE. AT THE SAME TIME, I NOTED, THE GKR HAS NOT BEEN ASKED BY HSIEH TO DO ANYTHING ON ITS OWN, SO LONG BORET COULD AFFORD TO AWAIT THE NEXT STEP BY ISOUP, WHICH WOULD PRESUMABLY BE THE SENDING OF THE NAMES OF THE OTHER TWO PROPOSED SIHANOUK REPRESENTATIVES. LONG BORET MENTIONED THAT HE WAS GOING TO SEND THE GKR AMBASSADOR TO COLOMBIA, THOUTCH VUTTHI, TO STOCKHOM TO CHECK UP ON ISOUP'S BONA FIDES. HE SAID THAT HE, VUTTHI AND ISOUP HAD BEEN CLASSMATES AT ONE TIME AND WERE WELL-KNOWN TO EACH OTHER.

6. COMMENT: I WISH THE PRIME MINISTER HAD SPENT HIS EIGHT HOURS ON A MORE PROMISING PROJECT.
DEAN

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